

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RS18273

The purpose of this bill is to amend Title 39, Health and Safety, Chapter 61, Idaho Conrad J-1 Visa Waiver Program, to establish National Interest Waiver criteria for physicians. A National Interest Waiver provides a mechanism for a foreign physician pursuing a change in immigration status to stay in the United States in exchange for a commitment to practice medicine to an underserved population for a three to five year period. The National Interest Waiver requires an attestation from the states Department of Health and Welfare to the U.S. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services that the physicians work in the area or facility is in the public interest. Final approval for these requests is made by the U.S. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services. Idaho communities may only apply for the placement of a foreign physician after demonstrating their inability to recruit an American physician, and all other recruitment/placement possibilities have proven to be unsuccessful.

This bill also modifies the Idaho Conrad J-1 Visa Waiver Program, section 39-6111(4), to allow physicians to show proof of eligibility for an Idaho license as part of the application criteria. Successful completion of the residency or training program and an unrestricted license to practice medicine in the State of Idaho are conditions for employment.

FISCAL NOTE

The administration of a National Interest Waiver Program in Idaho will be funded by receipts generated from levying a processing fee of \$350.00 for each application received. At the beginning of each state fiscal year, the cost to administer the program will be reviewed and may be revised at the discretion of the Director of the Department. The Department estimates that one application will be processed from communities in FY 2009. The processing fee will support the time of staff and other associated costs to review and process the application. Other than the obligatory fee, there are no federal or state funds to support this program. There is no impact to the General Fund.

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